



April 17, 2014

This week's edition includes important information I want to share with you:

- **Working Together:** The department recently collaborated with staff from Buffalo River Services, Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, Tucker's House and Habitat for Humanity of Williamson County to improve bathroom accessibility for the Fuentes family of Spring Hill, TN. Ariel, 14, has cerebral palsy and his mother needed assistance with lifting for her and Ariel's safety. It was fun for Ariel to see Sandra Zaccari (Tucker's House Board Member), Sunny Rosenbalm (Tucker's House President), Billy Whipple (Habitat for Humanity Project Manager) and Adrian O'Bryant (DIDD Case Manager) when they arrived to assess his home for a roll-in shower.

Ariel's mother initially requested help through Cecilia Melo-Romie, Statewide DIDD Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Outreach Coordinator from Vanderbilt Kennedy Center. Family Support Program (FSP) funds through Buffalo River Services were used for the project and covered about a third of the actual cost. This program is greatly appreciated by families, but financial assistance is sometimes needed to supplement additional costs. Therefore, FSP agencies will often partner with other agencies and resources to try and meet families needs. Hiller Plumbing and "Bin There Dumped That" graciously donated their services for this project as well. We are excited to see the changes in this family's life that will occur as a result of the generosity and collaboration of several people! A video of the Fuentes' story is available [here](#).

- **Free Training on Customized Employment (CE) and *Discovery*:** The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) Subject Matter Experts Michael Callahan and Abby Cooper will be co-facilitating a series of in-person trainings on May 20-21, June 25-26 and July 21-22. Specifically, May sessions will cover an overview of CE, the steps involved in CE, and understanding and implementing *Discovery*, Group *Discovery*, Customized Job Development and your role in the CE and *Discovery* process. Additionally, small homework assignments will be given in all sessions. The June training will include the history of CE and go into detail about the steps included in *Discovery*. Additional topics covered on June 26 will be completing profiles, creating visual resumes and components of the CE meeting. For July's session, topics will cover needs analysis, using visual resumes, job negotiations, sales aspect of job development, the art of asking and preparations before speaking with employers.

Please note the sessions build upon each other and a strong commitment is needed to attend all three sessions. Additionally, all meetings will be held at Clover Bottom Developmental Center in the One Cannon Way basement (275 Stewarts Ferry Pike, Nashville). For meeting times and to RSVP for **all three sessions**, please contact Betty Chester at Betty.Chester@tn.gov by May 16, 2014.

- **West Planning and Policy Council (WPPC):** The WPPC will be holding its quarterly meeting April 22 from 10:15 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at the Cordova Library on 8457 Trinity Road. This meeting is open to the public, space permitting.

- **Requirements for Day Services Supervisory Visits:** The department has received a request to clarify requirements for supervisory visits for Day Services. Please read memorandum #194 (attached) on this subject.
- **Tennessee Disability MegaConference:** The 12th annual MegaConference will be held May 29-30, 2014 in Nashville and will feature world-class keynote speakers, interactive workshops and educational sessions among other events. For more information or to register, please click [here](#).
- **Employment Success Story:** Through the SRVS *Employment First* initiative and the *Discovery* process, Lisa has successfully transitioned into community employment with a job that matches her interest in working in an office setting.

Lisa became employed as a General Clerk I at Medtronic in February 2014. She works in an office that was customized and carved for her and the company. Her specific job duties were defined after several meetings with Medtronic management and SRVS staff. Together, they were able to identify unmet needs within the company's departments and match them to Lisa's skills. Lisa will continue to receive job coaching from her SRVS employment consultant for each new task identified as her project.



One of Lisa's primary responsibilities is to assist in setting up lunches and meetings in the Museum of Modern Spinal Surgery. The meetings bring in doctors who are guests from around the world. She folds and places the napkins a certain way and arranges silverware on the dining tables. She also sets up drinks and snacks. When lunch is over, she gathers the dishes, rinses and places them in the dishwasher. The food service manager is thrilled to have Lisa's assistance.

Lisa has excelled on the job and is acquiring new skills. She is learning how to use the computer to log in, clock in and out on a time clock program and review her weekly calendar for assignments and messages from her supervisor. She has also mastered how to choose the correct icons on her computer to navigate between pages. Another enhanced skill development for Lisa is practicing her typing skills. Medtronic allows Lisa extra time to practice using a typing book and Medtronic documents. She also does shredding, which she loves, in her main department and uses a labeling machine called the P-Touch to make labels for files in various departments. This is a task that has freed some departments from relying on outside staffing agencies.

Lisa's successful placement is proof that one can never impose limitations on a person's ability until that person is given the opportunity to try. Lisa has achieved skills she did not realize she was capable of doing. Having an employer vested in the person's potential is also a key factor in any employee's success. Lisa is just one example of how SRVS employment staff is connecting job seekers to appropriate employers who believe in the person; a winning combination for both the person supported and company.

- **Vocational Rehabilitation State Plan Public Hearings:** The Rehabilitation Act, as amended, requires public hearings to be conducted on proposed state plans for the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS). The 2014 public hearings will be held as follows:

DATE	CITY	ADDRESS	TIME	EDT/CDT
Tuesday, May 13	Dyersburg	McIver's Grant Public Library 410 West Court Street	5:00 p.m.	CDT
Wednesday, May 14	Memphis	Shelby County Schools Auditorium 2597 Avery Avenue	5:00 p.m.	CDT
Friday, May 16	Knoxville	State Plaza Bldg (Old TN Career Ct.) 2700 Middle Brook Pike	4:00 p.m.	EDT
Thursday, May 22	Johnson City	Tennessee Career Center 2515 Wesley Street	2:00 p.m.	EDT
Wednesday, May 28	Chattanooga	Tennessee Career Center 5600 Brainerd Road	4:00 p.m.	EDT
Thursday, May 29	Nashville	Marriott Hotel 600 Marriott Drive	5:00 p.m.	CDT

Attendees will have an opportunity to provide valuable feedback and suggestions on the Vocational Rehabilitation program's annual state plan updates. The draft plan will also be available on the [DRS website](#) by April 21 with instructions on how comments can be submitted if you cannot attend a meeting.

- **March of Dimes:** Two ladies who live at Greene Valley are busy raising funds for Greeneville's March for Babies. Last Saturday, Melissa Jenkins and Gail Moore participated in a city-wide roadblock and from all reports, their first-time experience was a lot of fun and very interesting. All involved said it was a lovely spring morning to be out and about participating with the community in such an important event.
- **Focus Groups:** For those unable to attend in March, Caira Garcia, East Tennessee Regional Office (ETRO) Operations Director, facilitated the employment initiative, "I Wanna Work" which began by having fun activities with persons identifying the type of job they'd really like to do. The second phase will involve developing an employment resume. All are welcome to attend the next focus group on April 29 from 12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. in the Greene County Skills conference room. Please RSVP by April 25 to Chaneth.Quemore@tn.gov or jwinters@theartn.org.



- **Middle Tennessee Community Homes (MTCH):** Tennie Laws retired from working with DIDD after 30 years of employment. Since retirement, she has volunteered on committees and most recently helped James Moore decorate his new home. Tennie worked on the finishing touches last week. James and Tennie have known each other for years and she was with him on moving day to hear his feedback. As you can tell from the picture, they are both having a great time!

Be safe and have a great holiday weekend!

~Debbie